

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 07542 260459Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----117370 260502Z /21
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3106

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7542

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EXDIS

FOR EA AND PM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, KS, US
SUBJ: ROKG REQUEST FOR PLANNING AND BUDGET DATA ON E-2C AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 212101

1. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION, I HAVE DECIDED TO SUPPORT
GENERAL VESSEY'S VIEW THAT WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AND PROVIDE
PLANNING AND BUDGE (P AND B) DATA TO THE KOREANS FOR THE
E-2C AIRCRAFT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE COGENT ARGUMENTS FOR TURNING
OFF THIS EXERCISE AT THIS PRELIMINARY STAGE.

2. GENERAL VESSEY AGREES THAT, ON COST EFFECTIVENESS GROUNDS,
THE KOREANS SHOULD NOT HAVE THE AIRCRAFT AND THAT IT WOULD
MAKE A MINOR DEFENSE CONTRIBUTION, MEASURED IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE COMBINED US-ROK EFFORT. BUT WE STILL HAVE TO DEAL
WITH LATENT KOREAN UNEASINESS OVER THE CONTINUED US
COMMITMENT. THE WARNING ARICRAFT IS SEEN BY SOME KOREANS
(ALBEIT IRRATIONALLY) AS A HEDGE AGAINST POSSIBLE DECREASE
IN US COMMITMENT. FOR THIS REASON, WE WOULD PREFER TO
FOLLOW THE USUAL POLICY, I.E., HAVE THE KOREANS GO
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THROUGH THE PLANNING EXERCISE TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES HOW
EXPENSIVE THE E-2C SYSTEM WOULD BE, AND THEN WEIGH THE
COSTS AND BENEFITS AGAINST THEIR OTHER NEEDS.

3. GENERAL VESSEY ASSURES ME THAT HE AND HIS STAFF
WILL TAKE A VERY FIRM POSITION AGAINST ROK ACQUISITION
OF THE AIRCRAFT THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PERIOD.

HE BELIEVES THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE OUR
GOAL OF TURNING THE KOREANS AWAY FROM THIS EXPENSIVE
AND UNNECESSARY SYSTEM AND AT THE SAME TIME AVOID
STIMULATING FURTHER DOUBTS IN THIS SENSITIVE PERIOD
ABOUT POTENTIAL DECLINE IN THE US COMMITMENT.

4. THE GENERAL THINKS THAN AN EXCEPTION TO PD-19 WILL
NOT BE REQUIRED SIMPLY TO PRESENT P AND B DATA. I WILL
DEFER TO HIS JUDGMENT ON PD-19 AT THIS TIME, BUT WOULD
WELCOME ANY EXPERT OPINION THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE TO
OFFER.

5. RESPONSE TO REFTTEL FOR WIDER WASHINGTON DISTRIBUTION
WILL FOLLOW AFTER CLEARANCE.
GLEYSTEN

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Message Attributes

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